The second meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts during the fiscal year 1915 was held in their office at 1729 New York avenue, northwest, Washington, D. C., on Friday, October 9, 1914. The following members were present:

Mr. French, the Chairman;

Mr. Olmsted;

Mr. Hastings;

Mr. Gilbert;

Mr. Moore;

Mr. Blashfield;

Mr. Anderson;

also Colonel Wm. W. Harts, U. S. A., the Secretary and Executive Officer.

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a. m., and proceeded at once to the business before it.

1. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING: The minutes of the last meeting, held July 24th last, were presented and approved.

2. PORTRAIT PAINTING OF CHIEF JUSTICE FULLER BY MR. VONNOH: Mr. French called the attention of the Commission to the report made at the last meeting upon five oil portraits of Chief Justice Fuller by five different artists, which stated that none of these portraits was worthy of acquisition by the Government. Mr. French gave his opinion that one of the portraits, the one painted by Mr. Vonnoh, could be made acceptable by the modification of one or two minor details, in particular the hands of the subject. The members also agreed with this, and suggested that the changes considered desirable be called to the attention of Mr. Vonnoh so that they could be effected. They further suggested that the Secretary communicate

verbally with the Chairman of the Senate Committee on the Library that Mr. Vonnoh may be permitted to make the alterations, and later have the revised portrait referred by the Senate Committee on the Library for report as to desirability of acquisition by the Government.

3. LIMITATION OF SUBSISTENCE: Colonel Harts called to the attention of the members recent legislation limiting officers and employees of the Government to expenses of subsistence not to exceed five dollars per day, and stated that, the opinion of the Comptroller of the Treasury is that this applies to the members of the Commission of Fine Arts. The matter was discussed and the Secretary requested to take no steps looking to the insertion of a provision in the appropriation for the Commission, exempting the members from the application of the law.

4. GRANT CIRCLE: The Commission then considered a tentative plan for the improvement of Grant Circle, Petworth, submitted by the office of Public Buildings and Grounds. This plan showed a rectangular arrangement of trees in the center of that circle, with a tennis court on each side. The Commission felt that the proposed arrangement should be modified so as to recognize the future vista to the Soldiers' Home on the line of the proposed parkway. The treatment of the circle will be planned accordingly.

5. ROSE GARDEN AND SWIMMING BEACH IN POTOMAC PARK: A tentative plan for a rose garden and swimming beach in Potomac Park, prepared by the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, was next considered. Mr. Burnap, landscape architect under that office, was present in consultation. The matter was discussed at some length and later referred to Mr. Olmsted to study the question on the ground and report his conclusions to the Commission before being communicated to the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds.

See report filed under Potomac Park. Copy furnished P. B. & G.

6. REPORTS ON VARIOUS BILLS SUBMITTED BY THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON THE LIBRARY: Reports to the Senate Committee on the Library on various bills submitted were deferred until the next meeting of the Commission. These bills, which had been referred to a committee consisting of Mr. Moore and Mr. Olmsted for the preparation of replies, are the following:

S. 1396, 63d Congress, 1st Session, for the erection of a monument in Washington of Matthew Fontaine Maury, of Virginia.
S. 5194, 63d Congress, 2d Session, providing for the erection of a statue in Washington of General John Sullivan.
S. 4472, 63d Congress, 2d Session, providing for the erection in the Canal Zone of a statue to be symbolic of Universal Peace.
S. 4882, 63d Congress, 2d Session, to erect a monument in the Canal Zone to Ferdinand de Lesseps.
S. 2440, 63d Congress, 2d Session, providing for the erection of a monument in Arlington to General Lawton.
S. 4253, 63d Congress, 2d Session, providing for the erection of a monument in Arlington to Admiral Wilkes.
S. 5916, 63d Congress, 2d Session, providing for the erection of a monument in Arlington to Admiral Porter.
S. 3120, 63d Congress, 1st Session, providing for the erection of a replica of John Quincy Adams Ward's statue of Washington in Washington.

The subject of the nature of monuments proposed for erection in Washington was discussed at some length, and will be recognized by the Commission in a general memorandum at the time the reports on these bills are transmitted to Congress.

Report on H. R. 17041, 63d Congress, 2d Session, proposing the purchase of 25 oil portraits of justices of the United States Supreme Court, was held over until the next meeting, so that members of the Supreme Court may be consulted and the places inspected where the portraits would hang if acquired.

Report on Senate Bill 4074, 63d Congress, 2d Session, proposing the purchase of an oil painting entitled "The death of Brevet Lieut. Col. Alonzo H. Cushing at Gettysburg" was deferred until the painting could be inspected. The owner has not yet sent it to Washington for this inspection, as requested.

Report on Senate Bill 5550, 63d Congress, 2d Session, providing for the purchase of an oil painting entitled "Our Glory-The Battleship Oregon", by William F. Halsall,

as deferred until the artist could be consulted regarding the modification of certain features of the painting. Mr. Blashfield, as a committee, inspected the painting later in the day with the artist who agreed to make the changes pointed out to him. The artist has reported that these changes have been made.

. MCMILLAN Park: Plans for the improvement of McMillan Park, submitted by the Chief of Engineers, U. S. Army, were inspected and recommended for approval.

. MERIDIAN HILL PARK: The office of Public Buildings and Grounds submitted two sketch designs showing a typical detail for the treatment of the lower wall of Meridian Hill Park along Sixteenth street. One design (A-A) showed battered walls, and the other (B-B) showed walls not battered. The design without batter (B-B) was approved.

. FRANCIS SCOTT KEY MONUMENT: At the request and direction of the Secretary of War a committee designated under the law to advise and consult with him regarding the erection of a monument to Francis Scoot Key, and others, at Fort McHenry, Baltimore, appeared at eleven o'clock for a conference regarding a site and designer for that monument. Mayor James H. Preston of Baltimore, the Chairman of the Committee, explained conditions of the site and their ideas regarding possible forms the monument might take. He invited the Commission to visit Baltimore and inspect Fort McHenry, but they regretted their inability to accept. They advised however that the first step to be taken should be the employment of a competent professional adviser, who, looking over the problem, could advise intelligently as to what would be the most suitable site, the best treatment of that site, and as to the method of deciding upon a competent artist.

Mr. Wenderoth, Supervising Architect of the Treasury, who was present upon the invitation of the committee, spoke, and volunteered his services in the handling of the whole project and also offered an employee of his office, to be detailed by the Secretary

of the Treasury, as the architectural adviser to the committee since he was in charge of designing ~~of~~ the new immigration station at Fort McHenry and would be otherwise competent to act. This appointment was also urged by Mayor Preston. The Commission deprecated the appointment of any employee of the office of the Supervising Architect, mainly because it would invite a conflict of authority between the Treasury Department and the Secretary of War who, under the law, has full power for the erection of the monument.

The Commission advised that, while the committee, with the approval of the Secretary of War, should select the architectural adviser, he should be selected from the most competent men available in the profession, experienced in monumental work, in order to ensure the best results for an important Government project.

After the committee had left, Mr. Olmsted and Colonel Harts were designated to prepare a letter with reference to the results of the conference, to be transmitted to the Secretary of War through the Chairman of the Committee. (See Exhibit A.)

10. MARBLE FOR THE AMERICAN RED CROSS BUILDING: During the meeting the Commission received a letter from the Secretary of War, Chairman of the Red Cross Memorial Commission, requesting them to advise, from the standpoint of artistic desirability, regarding the following marbles which have been bid upon in connection with the erection of the Red Cross building; Danby, Amicalola, South Dover, and pink Tennessee; and further to advise which will be most likely to retain its original color longest, or, when it weathers, which will weather the most artistically. The Commission felt that any of the white marbles named is suitable for this building from the point of view of durability and appearance, and that, in this location and for a building of the scale and type, there would be but little difference as to which would retain its original color longest or weather most artistically. They recommended that the advice of the architect in recommending the marble offered at the lowest price (which was understood to be Danby) be accepted. (See Exhibit B.)

11. INTERIOR DEPARTMENT OFFICE BUILDING: After a short interval for luncheon, which was taken in the office, the Commission met in conference George Otis Smith, Director of the Geological Survey and Chairman of the Board of the Interior Department having in charge matters in connection with the proposed new office building for bureaus of that Department, and the Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department who has direct charge of preparation of the plans for that building. The Commission had advised the Secretary of the Treasury, upon request, that that building be designed not higher than eighty feet, but subsequent correspondence seemed to indicate that this height limit would not be observed despite the recommendation. The conference had, therefore, been arranged so as to give the Commission the opportunity to discuss with the officials in charge all the points involved and to come to a satisfactory conclusion regarding the height. All the correspondence in the case, applying directly to the question, was read by the Secretary.

The Supervising Architect thereupon explained that it now seems probable on the basis of the studies for the building, as far as they have progressed, that the requirements of the Interior Department can be met without exceeding the limitation of height which would be imposed by the building laws if those laws should apply to Government structures. This was considered quite satisfactory by the Commission. (Building to front on F street instead of on E street - see subsequent correspondence)

12. ANNUAL REPORT: Subject to such minor corrections as individual members might suggest, the body of the Annual Report was approved for transmittal to the President. It has been forwarded.

13. PANAMA-PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL EXPOSITION: The proposed exhibit of the Commission for the Panama-Pacific International Exposition was discussed, and progress made along the lines laid out considered satisfactory. The proposed arrangement of partitions for the display of the exhibit was approved.

There being no further business before the meeting, the Commission adjourned at 3:30 p. m., subject to the call of the Chairman.

Approved:
David C. Finch
Chairman
Mussey Hurt

October 12, 1914.

r:

The Commission of Fine Arts, in the matter of the monument in memory of Francis tt Key, author of The Star-Spangled Banner, and the soldiers and sailors who partici-ted in the battle of North Point and the attack on Fort McHenry in the War of 1812, ncerning which you asked the advice of the Commission through the Advisory Board reated by the Act providing for the said monument, respectfully reports as follows:

The Advisory Committee met with the Commission of Fine Arts at the offices of the tter on the ninth instant, explained the circumstances of the case, and asked for dvice, - first, as to the location of the monument within the Fort McHenry Reservation, nd - second- as to the selection of a designer. The Committee also extended to the ommission a cordial and much appreciated invitation to visit Baltimore and examine the ites under consideration.

The Commission explained that, while it is always ready to review a tentative ecision in regard to the site or design of a work of art when submitted to it as the esults of a careful study of local conditions, and is glad to express an opinion upon he artistic wisdom of the proposed decision as indicated by the data submitted, it is nerally impossible for the members of the Commission to undertake that thorough and etailed personal study of monument sites outside of the District of Columbia upon which he initiative in such matters ought always to be based. This is due not only to the mount of time and expense involved in such studies and the very limited appropriation vailable, but also to the fact that the Commission was created by Congress to act as a oard of review in matters of art rather than to take the initiative and to assume execu-tive responsibility in the creation of works of art.

It was further stated that in this, as in most other cases, it would be unwise to reach a final decision in regard to the exact site without the fullest consideration f the general type of design to be adopted for the monument. The two questions are o closely interrelated that they ought always to be taken up together and given the ost thorough study by a responsible artist of unquestioned ability.

Exhibit B 11

The advice of the Commission in the premises is to employ an architect of first-class ability to make a full study of the available sites and all the conditions of the problem; and to report his advice in detail as to the best site, the type of design most appropriate for the site and conditions, and the best method of procuring the kind of design which the case demands. Such a professional adviser should be employed on the distinct understanding that he shall be debarred from undertaking the design himself, and his recommendations should be supported by sufficient information to enable the Secretary of War, with the counsel of the Advisory Committee and of the Commission of Fine Arts, to form a reasonable judgment of their wisdom.

This advice is in accordance with the general attitude of the Commission of Fine Arts on such questions, the reasons in support of which are set forth more fully in the appended extracts from its forthcoming Annual Report.

By direction of the Commission:

Very respectfully,

WM. W. HARTS

Colonel, U. S. Army,

Secretary and Executive Officer.

The Honorable

The Secretary of War.

(Through the Francis Scott Key Monument
Advisory Committee.)

Memorandum extracts from the Annual Report of the Commission of Fine Arts for the fiscal year 1914, for the information of the Secretary of War.

ATTITUDE OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS WITH REFERENCE TO GOVERNMENT COMPETITIONS AND THE SELECTION OF ARTISTS IN GENERAL.

The Commission having observed, during four years, the operation of various methods by which the Government has arranged for the designing of works of art, offers the following conclusions and suggestions as likely to be helpful in securing good results from future appropriations for such purposes.

The function of this Commission which appears to have been chiefly in view when the act creating it was framed, and which the members of the Commission regard as its main duty, is to act in a critical capacity as an advisory board of review least inferior works of art be inadvertently accepted by the Government. In the performance of this function the Commission found itself, in too many cases, unable to approve the quality of designs submitted to it; and has felt that better results could have been secured by different methods in procuring the designs without altering the relation of the Commission to the procedure in any way.

On the other hand, the Commission has several times been asked to go considerably beyond the duty of passing upon the quality of a given design by helping officers of the Government to decide a competition, thus making the Commission of Fine Arts, in effect, a jury of award. In other cases the Commission has been asked to take the initiative in selecting artists.

It seems important to suggest methods of procedure in selecting artists that may be expected to give good results without forcing upon this Commission duties of an executive sort which would tend to impair its usefulness as an impartial board of review, for which function the Commission as an unpaid board is not properly adapted.

The conditions surrounding various cases differ so greatly that no universally applicable method of procedure can be laid down, but the first step in nearly every

case should be the appointment of a Professional Adviser, debarred from undertaking the design and execution of the work himself, but technically well informed and of large experience in dealing with the solution of problems of the sort in question. Such an adviser should first confer with the executive officials in charge, make himself familiar in detail with the conditions of the problem, and formulate a full statement thereof so as to interpret from the technical point of view of a designer the requirements and preferences of the responsible officials. He would then be in a position to give well-considered and definite advice as to the method of procedure best adapted for selecting the right designer for the particular case in question. His services would ordinarily terminate upon the appointment of the executive designer, unless further employed. For these services he should be paid a fee corresponding with the importance of the work and the amount of time involved.

In most cases such a professional adviser would probably recommend the direct selection of a designer, based upon evidence of ability as shown in completed works. In some such cases the professional adviser may himself name the designer and state the reasons for his choice, including citations of executed works which give evidence of the particular sort of ability required for the problem in hand. In other cases of greater importance and difficulty, as a safeguard against personal bias on the part of the adviser in making a direct selection, he should nominate two or more collaborators who would join with him in discussing the fitness of candidates and in recommending a choice. The report of the special adviser, with or without collaborators, should include all the facts and arguments necessary to support the conclusions reached.

Whether in the choice of a professional adviser, in the direct selection of a designer, or in the nomination of competitors, there should be no arbitary limitation of the choice to artists of the locality where the work is to be placed, out of a mistaken regard for local pride. No poorer service can be rendered to the artists of any community than to limit the award of commissions to local talent. Such limitation immediately furnishes an object lesson to all other localities and the logical sequence

would be the debarring of the native artist from work in any part of the country. The Commission of Fine Arts sees no objection whatever to the appointment of a local artist, but absolutely disapproves of the selection of any native <u>because</u> a native.

The Commission should not act as a jury of selection for a number of reasons. First, because in relation to important decisions upon sculpture or painting, one sculptor or painter member of a jury is not enough. Second, because repeated decisions of various cases by one and the same jury are inadvisable as likely to perpetuate possible individual bias. Third, because as a jury's decision, whatever it may be, disappoints all but the successful competitor, repeated decisions by one and the same jury would, in time, alienate a large body of people; and if the said jury were the Commission of Fine Arts, its usefullness would thereby be impaired. Fourth, because constant jury action of the Commission of Fine Arts might tend to make some competitors shape their work with reference to what they thought was to the individual liking of members of the Commission jury.

October 9, 1914.

The Honorable
The Secretary of War,
Chairman, The Red Cross Memorial Commission.

Sir:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at their meeting today, gave careful consideration to your letter of this date requesting them to consider, from the standpoint of artistic desirability, the following marbles proposed for the construction of the Red Cross Memorial Building, - namely, Danby (Vermont), Amicalola (Georgia), South Dover (New York), and Victoria Pink (Tennessee), - and to advise you which of these stones will be most likely to retain its original color longest, or, when it weathers, which stone will weather most artistically.

In the opinion of the Commission of Fine Arts any one of the white marbles mentioned above is suitable for this building from the point of view of durability and appearance. In this location and for a building of this scale and type there would be but little difference as to which of these marbles would retain its original color longest or which would weather most artistically. We would recommend, therefore, that the advice of the architect in recommending the marble offered at the lowest price, - namely, Danby marble, - be accepted.

Respectfully,

DANIEL C. FRENCH,

Chairman.

ABC

Exhibit B

October 17, 1914.

The Honorable

The Secretary of the Treasury.

Sir:

With reference to your communication of September eighth last regarding the proposed height of the new office building to be erected on Square 143 in this city to house various indicated bureaus of the Interior Department, the Commission of Fine Arts at their meeting on Friday, October ninth last, met in conference the Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department, who has immediate charge of the preparation of the plans for this building, and the Director of the Geological Survey, Chairman of the board of officials of the Interior Department who have charge of the interests of that Department in connection with the erection of the building, both of whom were requested by the heads of their Department to attend this conference.

The Supervising Architect explained that it now appears on the basis of the studies for the building as far as they have progressed that the requirements of the Interior Department can be met without exceeding the limitation of height which would be imposed by the District Building Laws if those laws should apply to Government structures. This, on E street, between Eighteenth and Nineteenth streets, northwest, is 85 feet, which was considered satisfactory.

Should be F st — see subsequent correspondence in files.

The Commission appreciates the cooperation of the Secretary of the Treasury and of the Secretary of the Interior in directing their representatives to meet them in conference.

Very respectfully,

WM. W. HARTS

Colonel, U. S. Army,

Secretary and Executive Officer.